


By Stephen Wagner
Paranormal Phenomena Expert

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Question: Is the paranormal real?

"I have before now taken a look at the paranormal and I have for about a year tried to persuade myself into believing it was fake," writes Amanda. "But now I have gotten into it again and I am very curious. It would be amazing if I came up close to one of these supernatural beings, but my family does not believe in this stuff and my parents hate it when I talk about it. I have some questions that just generally say: Does it exist and how do I find out for myself? I have some doubt from the way I was raised, and I hate to say that I need to know myself. Any advice?"

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say no. Rather, I tell them that there is evidence for ghost and haunting phenomena reported over thousands of years, but as yet we don't really understand what it is or what it represents. We have various theories, but no one knows for sure. But because it certainly is a part of the human experience, it is quite worthy of investigation.

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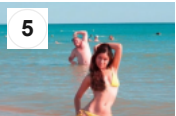
Answer: Amanda, answering whether or not the paranormal is real is actually a little tricky because by definition paranormal phenomena (paranormal meaning "beyond normal") is something that is mysterious, unknown or not fully understood. So understanding or coming to terms with the paranormal is a process or a journey. We often only have fragmentary evidence and the experiences of people; more rare is hard evidence that can be brought into a lab to be analyzed. And that scarcity of hard evidence may be due to the nature of the phenomena itself (such as ghosts), and we do not yet have the proper tools to fully examine them.

"Belief," however, should play no role in the exploration of the paranormal. Belief implies that you're accepting an idea on faith; if you believe something, there's no reason to examine it further -- your mind is made up. When people ask me if I believe in ghosts, I

So my answer is: Yes, the paranormal is real in that there are many mysteries in this life -- from ghosts to psychic phenomena to reincarnation and all the rest of it -- that are not understood or presently explained by

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evidence. (Be careful, however, there's a lot of crap out there, both on the internet and in book form. Look for reputable authors.) You'll find that exploring the paranormal in this way is a fascinating, mind-opening journey -- an ongoing expedition into the mysteries that surround us and that may actually be clues to the true nature of our existence on this planet.

current scientific models.

The rest of my answer is: You don't need to *believe* in the paranormal. Instead, you should find out as much about it as you can, read the case studies and examine the

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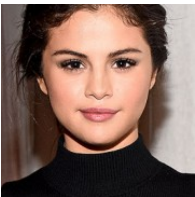
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